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NECK OF THE WOODS

an area; a place

1. I don't recognize you and I know just about everyone in this town. You must not be from this *neck of the woods*.
2. Excuse me. Can you give me directions? I'm not familiar with this *neck of the woods*.

The expression is often used to describe what part of the country a person comes from, but it can also be used to describe unfamiliarity with a part of a city or state. It is frequently used in a negative structure.

NEED (SOMETHING) LIKE (ONE) NEEDS A HOLE IN THE HEAD

to have absolutely no need for something

1. Bonita arrived at work to find a new stack of papers on her desk. "I *need more work like I need a hole in the head*," she complained.
2. Don't subscribe to another magazine, since you already receive more magazines than you can possibly read. You *need a new magazine like you need a hole in the head*.

The expression, which comes from Yiddish, is ironic. One certainly wouldn't want or need a hole in one's head, and one wants or needs the thing in question just as little.

NIP (SOMETHING) IN THE BUD

to stop something before it becomes big or involved; to stop something before it gets much of a start

1. My three-year-old son has become rude and demanding. I don't like his bad behavior and I'm going to *nip it in the bud* before it gets any worse.
2. The boss wasn't happy with a few of his workers who had begun to leave the office before quitting time. He was afraid they would fall into the habit of leaving early if he didn't *nip it in the bud*, so he told them they would have to stop.

The expression compares stopping a bad situation to cutting (nipping) a flower before it has a chance to grow (while it is still a bud).

NITTY-GRITTY, THE

the heart of the issue; the most important part of the discussion; the essential points

1. These conferences always begin with introductory speeches that don't say much. I'm glad when they're finished and the speakers get down to *the nitty-gritty*—that's when we really learn something new.

2. Let's skip the small talk, and go straight to *the nitty-gritty*: what price do you want for the car, and when will you be able to part with it?

Compare to: *get down to brass tacks*; *bottom line*; *long and short of it*

NIX (SOMETHING)

to cancel an idea or plan; to reject or forbid something

1. I thought it was an excellent idea, but he *nixed it*. Now we are back to where we started.
2. Every time I ask my parents if I can visit my cousins, they *nix* my request. They think my cousin is a bad influence on me.

Synonym: *give (something) the thumbs down*

NONE OF (ONE'S) BUSINESS

private; not for anybody else to know

1. You keep asking me how much money I have, but I don't want to tell you. It's *none of your business*.
2. I wish my sister would stop asking questions about my personal life. It's *none of her business*.

NOT HAVE A LEG TO STAND ON

to be in an indefensible situation or to have no support for an argument or case

1. Some of the workers accused Louis of stealing from the company, but they *didn't have a leg to stand on*. He had never stolen from the company and they had no proof that he had.
2. Stop trying to persuade me that you didn't start the fight. You *don't have a leg to stand on*. All the children saw the whole thing, and they told me exactly how it happened.

Having a leg to stand on lends support to something, and *not having a leg to stand on* means support is lacking.

NOTHING TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

ordinary; so-so; not especially good or important

1. Tom's parents wanted to know how he liked the school. Tom said the school was all right, but it was *nothing to write home about*.
2. When we asked them about their trip, they said they couldn't complain about it but the hotel was *nothing to write home about*.

Antonyms: *something to crow about*; *a feather in one's cap*.

The expression originates from the idea that if one were writing a letter to one's family, the person or thing or event in question is so ordinary or insignificant that one wouldn't even mention it in the letter.

NOT (ONE'S) CUP OF TEA

not to suit someone; not to one's liking

1. I like going to parks and doing things outdoors. Going to museums and galleries just *isn't my cup of tea*.
2. The man JoAnn met at the party was nice, but he wasn't *her cup of tea*.

The expression is usually used in the negative.

NOT WORTH A DIME

worthless

1. Scott thought that he could sell his collection of comic books to make some extra money, but then he learned that everybody else already had the same comic books. His collection *wasn't worth a dime*.
2. Police caught the diamond thief when he tried to sell a fake diamond. It was *not worth a dime*.

Synonyms: *not worth a dime*; *not worth a hill of beans*; *not worth the paper it's printed on*; *not worth a plugged nickel*

This expression is always used in the negative.

NOT WORTH A HILL OF BEANS

worthless

1. If you don't follow through on what you say, your word is *not worth a hill of beans*.
2. You should take good care of that car. If it stops running properly, it's *not worth a hill of beans*.

Synonyms: *not worth a dime*; *not worth a red cent*; *not worth a plugged nickel*; *not worth the paper it's printed on*

This expression is always used in the negative.

NOT WORTH A PLUGGED NICKEL

worthless

1. The millionaire invested in oil wells that proved to be dry. They *weren't worth a plugged nickel*.
2. I bought this house before I knew it was located on a toxic waste site. Now it *isn't worth a plugged nickel*.

Synonyms: *not worth a dime*; *not worth a red cent*; *not worth a hill of beans*; *not worth the paper it's printed on*

This expression is always used in the negative.

NOT WORTH A RED CENT

worthless

1. That coupon is expired, so the grocery store won't accept it. It's *not worth a red cent*.
2. A telephone directory from thirty years ago isn't going to help you find what you need. It's *not worth a red cent*.

Synonyms: *not worth a dime*; *not worth a plugged nickel*; *not worth a hill of beans*; *not worth the paper it's printed on*

This expression is always used in the negative.

NOT WORTH THE PAPER IT'S PRINTED ON

worthless

1. If you miss the train, you can't just go at another time. Your ticket *won't be worth the paper it's printed on*.
2. Make sure you spend or exchange all of your money before we leave this country; once we leave, it *isn't worth the paper it's printed on*.

Synonyms: *not worth a dime*; *not worth a plugged nickel*; *not worth a hill of beans*; *not worth a red cent*

This expression is always used in the negative and usually refers to documents or money, i.e., things printed on paper.